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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the dilemma of the non-specialist teacher of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or English for Science and Technology when faced with technical content, and describes the response of De La Salle University (Philippines) that broadened the graduate curriculum to help develop future ESP teacher competencies. The personal experiences and frustrations of an uninitiated ESP teacher and the limitations of even the well-educated layman in teaching specialized language, drawing on recent literature are described. Five essential elements of ESP teacher training are identified: familiarity with key concepts in a scientific or professional discipline; acquaintance with its discourse characteristics and skill in genre analysis; familiarity with discourse and knowledge appropriation processes in science and engineering; awareness of expectations and valuing systems; and a repertoire of strategies for teaching science and engineering genres. The graduate curriculum in ESP teaching designed for this purpose is then described, focusing on three courses specifically constructed for this purpose. Some related course materials are appended. Contains 19 references. (MSE)

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ED 431 336

Preparing ESP Practitioners for the Unfamiliar

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Paper presented at the TESOL Convention, Chicago
March 26, 1996

Introduction

Many teachers assigned to teach English for Specific Purposes are unprepared to handle the genres their students study, particularly if these happen to be scientific and technical reports and papers. Although it is perceived that the lack of specialized knowledge of content is the main hindrance to teaching EST/EPP effectively, ESP literature (Strevens 1988; Swales 1990; Pholsward and Allen 1988), as well as insight from genre studies (Martin 1989; Swales 1990; Freedman and Medway, 1994), and schema theory (Cohen, et al., 1988) reveal that difficulties may be caused instead by unfamiliarity with science/technology and professional genre forms and discourse conventions, their purposes and functions, as well as the value systems that underlie discourses in various fields.

In this paper, I describe the dilemma of the uninitiated ESP teacher/ practitioner handling English for Professional Purposes or English for Science and Technology in an English as a Second Language setting. I follow-up by discussing how De La Salle University in Manila, Philippines, responded to the situation by including in its graduate ESP courses, teaching approaches which focus on developing future ESP teachers' competence in dealing with professional and scientific genres.

Face to face with the unfamiliar

I was introduced to English for Specific Purposes on the job, as, a number of teachers were (and still are). The course I first taught was an academic skills-based course for freshman undergraduates, more commonly referred to as English for Academic Purposes (EAP),. In addition, I taught courses in British/American literature, my "real" specialty. It wasn't too long thereafter that I was assigned to teach an English for Engineering course, which no one else wanted because of the perceived difficulties with

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the technical language and content. The textbook, co-written by an engineer and two language teachers, was based on authentic materials and tasks drawn from the various sub-disciplines of engineering. Unfortunately, the textbook appeared to have been intimidating to most of the teachers. This was early in the 1980's when register analysis and authenticity were buzzwords in ESP in the Philippines. At that time, teachers like I, having a background only in literary studies, were unable to do very much to modify tasks and exercises to suit our comfort level for lack of a better understanding of ESP and language teaching principles.

I was in denial for more than a year, insisting to myself that my academic preparation and intellect were enough scaffolding as I tackled tasks related to solubility, electromagnetism, and airport construction. Later, however, I moved on to a period of self-doubt; there were student questions which I could not answer; there were too many activities with which I could not be creative because I was not well enough grounded in the specialized subject matter. One colleague experienced an even harsher reaction in her attempts to teach a class of science students when she received a visit from a content specialist who told her to stay away from teaching science! Still, another colleague, who had an undergraduate degree in Physics, was enjoying teaching English for Engineering and was getting positive feedback from her students.

Thus, my colleagues and I debated about the extent of the gap in the ESP teacher's background that had to be filled, how familiar with content and discourse forms ESP teachers had to be before they were competent. ESP literature provides some answers. For example, Hutchinson and Waters (1985) describes the ESP practitioner's required background to be a "general knowledge acquired from being part of a 'consumer-oriented, technologically developed society'" (p. 176). Later, Strevens (1988) writing about the problems of the ESP teacher recommends that the ESP teacher become an "educated

layman who . . . becomes familiar with the language of a subject though without pretending or seeking to become a specialist in the subject itself (p.9)" It was comforting to know that these experts thought a degree in science or engineering is not required of us. I, however, found it interesting that the interpretation of "general knowledge" or "educated layman knowledge" varied to some extent among my colleagues. My "general knowledge" was another teacher's technical knowledge; my general familiarity with how my personal computer works was described as technical by another teacher, who did not use one. Such a difference is evident in a developing country like the Philippines where scientific and technical advancement/sophistication is uneven. Some teachers and graduate students are still unfamiliar with computers beyond the word processing function, for example. Quite a number of graduate students come from the rural and provincial areas where science textbooks are outdated, science literacy is low, and educational technology is so rare and expensive that only a few privileged teachers and students become familiar with its use.

Considering this background, even the least demanding descriptions of background knowledge required of the ESP teacher becomes quite a challenge. The question, therefore, of how much general background knowledge in science and technology must an ESP teacher possess is not an easy one to answer. Though an important consideration in the development of an ESP practitioner, content does not define his/her role in relation to the content specialist. In fact, the ESP teacher who treads into the area of content only underscores his/her lack of it vis-a-vis the specialist and, in some cases, the student. Despite this, it is a necessary question to ask since in responding to ESL/EFL students' language needs, we are compelled to work with the discourse of their specialization. In addition, some of these students are already quite familiar with the field and may find learning less motivating from a teacher who does not understand what they perceive to be basic concepts.

In comparison to the controversy about content, there has been general acknowledgment that ESP teachers, in order to be effective, do have to be familiar with particular discourse forms, including their purposes and grammatico-syntactic features, as well as the ways of reasoning/thinking within the discipline to which their students belong. These areas, more commonly referred to as aspects of genre, represent a level of knowledge unacknowledged or taken for granted by the content teacher, and until recently, by the language teacher despite their crucial role in the enculturation of students into academic disciplines. Some competence in genre analysis appears to be a necessary tool for the ESP teacher.

Nevertheless, the situation of most new ESP teachers can be more adequately described by a comparison with Bizzell's (1986) description of the dilemma faced by basic writers entering college: basic writers experience a clash of dialects (Standard and non-Standard English); new ESP teachers experience a clash between standard English and technical English. Basic writers experience a clash of discourse forms (academic discourse and popular/non-academic discourse); new ESP teachers experience a clash between literary and scientific/technical discourse forms. Finally basic writers experience a clash of ways of thinking (academic world view and home world view), while new ESP teachers experience a clash between inclinations to value imagination and emotion and the pragmatic/objective/ unemotional demands of a technical/scientific world view. This latter Strevens (1988) describes as one of attitudes as in the ESP teacher's often anti-scientific stance. He suggests that the ESP teacher "suspend and overcome" his/her biases against science and view the increased responsibility as a means to extend the craft of language teaching.

The Answer in Genre Analysis

Bizzell's study coincides with those of Swales (1986, 1990), Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) and many others working in the area of genre analysis in ESP. Their studies have convinced us that the

understanding and teaching of non-literary genres are inevitable in our profession. Thus with less resistance than we had with content, our group of ESP teachers added to our list of needs, the challenge of genre analysis, i.e., studying discourse conventions and the ways in which discourses are developed in a discipline, developing awareness of the kind of reasoning that accompanies this process and of the expectations and valuing systems operating in the field.

In teaching engineering students the technical proposal, for example, we learned that it is not enough to provide students with the various sections of the technical report. What facilitates the writing process are activities which clarify the function of the technical proposal in engineering, how each section contributes to that function, what the possible variations are in the macro-structure, as well as the syntax and grammar (and the effects of these variations on the purpose and effectiveness of the proposal). Proposal writing is also a collaborative project that involves both a team of engineers with varying specialties using in-house and field research. These characteristics are important considerations in planning activities that are appropriate and useful for the successful completion of the project..

Equally important alongside this heightened understanding is the need to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies for instructing students on technical/science genres and effective English communication in their field. The ESP teacher is in the position of converting into language lessons, content and formal characteristics of a discourse that are part of other disciplines. He/She mediates for the student, especially the ESL and EFL student, whose difficulties arise from a lack of proficiency in English. How can ESP practitioners use this unique role to design classes that are interesting and effective? In what ways can the ESP teacher be a relevant part of a student's enculturation into his/her discipline? Can a non-member of a discourse community help initiate a would-be member to appropriate the community's discourse? Freeman and Medway (1994) articulate this dilemma well.

> How science is written remains, to an irreducible degree, a matter of "local knowledge" (Geertz 1983) that is only incompletely available to outside analysis . . .
>
> Equally unattainable, on the other hand, is the objective of a full induction into the genres of working science for a student while still in school, because the exigencies that motivate the strategies embodied in the genre impinge only on the working scientist. School writing may imitate and adapt features of working genres but cannot *be* those genre . . . This is not to say that it cannot grant experience of the ways of thinking or procedures of handling concepts and styles of deployment of argument, that are employed in the professional domain. Indeed, that is one of the most important purposes of school writing. (pp 13-14)

Given these challenges for an ESP practitioner handling mostly engineering and science students, I list below the aspects which need to be addressed by an ESP teacher training program:

1. Familiarity with key concepts and topics in a scientific/professional discipline. A teacher instructing engineering students should have some acquaintance with concepts in such areas as general physics, chemistry, geometry, and manufacturing so that he/she could offer some guidance in the choice of an appropriate topic for a technical proposal. At the very least, the ESP teacher must know where and/or from whom a student might obtain the appropriate help.

2. Acquaintance with discourse characteristics of science and technology/professional genres and development of skills for analyzing genres in engineering and the sciences. What are some typical goals and objectives for an ESP Engineering teacher in this regard?

- to be able to identify the purpose and rationale behind the technical proposal in engineering;
- to be able to explain the parts of a technical proposal in (civil, mechanical, chemical, production, or industrial) engineering, as well as the sub-genres produced as part of the proposal, such as the feasibility study, the progress report, the instruction report, and business letter/memo;
- to provide guidance in conducting a feasibility study to substantiate the technical proposal, as well as in composing progress reports, memos and other related forms;

- to suggest appropriate non-prose forms to effectively communicate information in various parts of the proposal.

3. Familiarity with discourse processes in science and engineering and with the way knowledge and language are appropriated. For example, an ESP teacher of engineering students should be able to explain the processes involved in the writing of a technical proposal to her/his students and provide useful guidance at every stage of the actual collaborative research/writing process. The teacher should be aware that a number of sub-genres such as the feasibility study and the progress report are often conducted and completed as part of preparing the proposal.

4. Awareness of the expectations and valuing system/s in engineering and the sciences with regard to written and oral discourse.

5. A repertoire of strategies and approaches for teaching science and engineering genres.

Preparing ESP practitioners for the unfamiliar: An M.A. major in ESP

The ESP program for teachers at De La Salle University was established in 1984 with the collaboration between the university, the British Council, and the University of Lancaster. It is a degree program within the school's Master of Arts program in Language and Literature. Its aim is to provide language teachers who intend to pursue or are currently teaching ESP with the theoretical and pedagogical background necessary to be effective ESP teachers. The program also encourages its students to pursue ESP research. The current program, revised in 1993, consists of basic, major and cognate courses. The list below excludes two literature course requirements.

- Foundations of Language Studies
- Research in Language Studies
- Statistical Methods in Language Studies

The major courses include:

- History and Development of ESP (no longer in the present list of courses)
- Methodology of Teaching Reading and Writing in ESP
- Curriculum Design and Materials Development (This used to be two separate courses: Needs Analysis and Syllabus Design , Materials Preparation)
- Discourse Analysis
- Psychology of Language Learning
- Grammatical Structure of English (revised program includes this course for first time)
- Introduction to Applied Linguistics

The cognate courses from which ESP students choose one are:

Ethnography of Linguistic Communication
Methodology of Teaching Oral Communication
Semantics and Pragmatics

In addition to the concentration in ESP, the program provides a strong grounding in general language teaching and applied linguistics. This emphasis is a result of observations over the years by staff that some of the anxiety and difficulties encountered by teachers who teach in an ESP program are due to a weak foundation in language teaching/applied linguistics. The traditional literature English major is not usually exposed to language teaching strategies and second language acquisition theory which are important background for ESP. This is an observation I had expressed elsewhere (Carreon, 1988), and I am pleased that colleagues at De La Salle are continuing to strengthen that aspect of the program.

Of the courses listed above, four in particular, were developed in consideration of the ESP teachers' needs presented so far in this paper. These courses are: History and Development of ESP, Need Analysis and Syllabus Design, Discourse Analysis , and Methodology of Teaching Reading and Writing in ESP. Of the four, I will present the first three, as these are the three with which I have become most acquainted since the establishment of the program in 1984.

The course History and Development of English for Specific Purposes is the most basic of these

four. It served as an introductory course for the M.A. students majoring in ESP, as well as an elective course for other non-ESP majors. In the course, students are introduced to the basic principles and historical development of ESP. The course dealt with a broad range of topics that are important to ESP, such as needs analysis, discourse analysis, subject matter/content, grammar and vocabulary, and language teaching methodologies. Each session was developed around important readings, both recent journal articles such as those published in the ESP Journal and some "basic" ESP literature that have come out of ESP literature around the world and in the Philippines. Various tasks based on the session topic reenforced concepts and principles presented and provided a springboard for critical discussion of issues arising from each topic. (See Appendix A and B)

The study of genre was not dealt with just in a single session. One aim of the course was to demonstrate the role of genre in ESP. In Session 3, ESP and Needs Analysis, students evaluate various models of assessing students' needs in order to arrive at a course design and methodology. These models emphasize the importance of familiarity with the "target" situation, i.e., students' social, linguistic, and academic/professional backgrounds. In one instance, the case method (Schmidt , 1981) was presented as a means to get acquainted with a learner's strategies for learning in a discipline. Although Schmidt does not mention the concept of genre, the process-oriented methodology she presents, which involves observation and participation in a learner's content courses, provides insights on the nature of lectures and exams in business administration that could be gained only from being an insider.

In the session on text analysis, the student/teacher is introduced to the concepts of register and genre analysis and to the importance of investigating "disciplinary cultures" (e.g. Swales, 1985). The importance of team teaching with content specialists is also discussed and suggested as an effective means

of getting acquainted with a particular discipline (e g Carreon, 1987)

The second course, Needs Analysis and Syllabus Design, provides opportunity for students to gather information about learners' target situations by observing classes in science or engineering colleges and by making audio recordings of class proceedings, preparing notes of teachers' lectures, interviewing students on the kind of background reading they may have done on assigned topics. The course takes its cue from the case method discussed by Schmidt, the ethnographic approach described by Ramani, Chacko, Singh and Glendinning (1988), as well as similar investigations of learners' content courses described in Jacobsen (1987) and Braine (1989). (See Appendix C and D.)

The course lecturer arranges for students not only to observe but also to attend courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Engineering. Matching course and student/teacher were based on a number of factors: schedules, availability of subject teachers for consultation, and the student/teacher's interest in the course. The ESP student/teacher also takes related course work and exams. Obviously, this enables the ESP student/teachers to familiarize themselves with a science and/or technical field, to become familiar with technical vocabulary and concepts and, hopefully, to absorb some of the "culture" of the discipline through interaction with science and engineering students and their teachers, as well as required textbooks and articles they read, and the quizzes/examinations in the course they take.

Feedback to this approach was generally positive, albeit with some apprehension expressed over the examinations they had to take. Although their performance in the tests had no bearing on their actual grade in the course, the fact that the courses were undergraduate courses placed pressure on them to do well. They also found it difficult to keep up in these classes as their graduate course commitments continued unabated. An important lesson learned from this experience is that interest in science and technology may develop slowly for many English majors. In fact, a lack of interest or even fear or dislike

for the sciences may have been the reason why they chose a liberal arts or education major in the first place.

The modular/ ethnographic approach to this course matched the field-based needs assessment work that is often a part of the ESP practitioner's job. It initiated the student/teachers quickly to the critical relationships and areas outside the language teaching departments. They gained some confidence in dialoguing with content teachers in order to clarify concepts, the basis for assessment, and project and task expectations. It is the program's hope that this new confidence will later on lead to productive cooperation between departments and faculty.

Finally, the third course, Discourse Analysis, is intended to formalize student/teachers' understanding of discourse, particularly non-literary genre by studying and applying various models for analysis using authentic pieces of discourse. To emphasize the role of scientific discourse, a number of sessions are devoted to various approaches and issues on the subject. In general, the course equips the ESP student/teacher with the means to study and become acquainted with discourse forms and texts that could come his/her way while teaching ESP.

Conclusion

Of the three courses described in this paper, two are still part of the list of courses after almost 10 years of the MA in Language and Literature, major in ESP. As in many similar programs, its focus and list of course offerings change over time to reflect the theoretical leanings of current faculty members, as well as their specialties. As part of this strengthening process, the curriculum has been modified to include a broader grounding in language and language teaching theories and pedagogy as a foundation for a concentration in ESP. In addition to such areas as second language acquisition theories, bilingual

theories, and the communicative approach, genre theory continues to be a strong component of the courses in curriculum design, materials development, and discourse analysis.

The program is intended to prepare graduates to return to their institutions completely qualified to teach ESP and to set up or develop ESP-based language curricula and classroom materials. The emphasis placed on genre analysis has certainly inspired numerous thesis projects to investigate texts, classroom discourse, and learning processes in engineering, medicine and allied health sciences, biology, physics, nursing, and economics. Some graduates have successfully presented their research at conferences in the Philippines and abroad. And most are well-placed in various colleges and universities, teaching some form of ESP. The program, I believe, has been successful in turning "basic" ESP teachers into more confident and competent practitioners. Future studies should investigate the effects on teaching and student learning of ESP teachers' developing awareness of their student's field.

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APPENDIX A

COURSE OUTLINE: HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ESP
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

SESSION	TOPIC	READINGS
1	Brief History of ELT The influences that gave rise to ESP Types of ESP	1) Hutchinson & Waters 1987 2) Robinson 1980
2	ESP at DLSU and the Philippines	3) Bautista 1986 4) Carreon 1986 5) Millington 1986 6) Sinha 1986
3	ESP and Needs Analysis	7) Kennedy and Bolitho 1984 8) Schmidt 1981 9) Bloor 1984 10) Mundy 1978
4 & 5	Text Analysis in ESP	11) Luzares 1988 12) Allen and Widdowson 1974 13) Swales 1985 14) Swales 1986a
6 & 7	Textbooks in ESP (Materials Design)	15) Swales 1986 16) Robinson 1980
8	The Teaching of Vocabulary in ESP	17) Swales 1986c 18) Kennedy and Bolitho 1984 19) Godman 1976 20) Anthony 1976 21) Godman and Payne 1981
9 & 10	Subject Matter and the ESP Teacher	22) British Council 1980 23) Carreon 1987
11	ESP: State of the Art and the Future	24) Swales 1986d, 1988 25) Strevens 1988 26) Johns 1988

—— This course was developed by Casilda E. Luzares, former Director of the Center for English for Specific Purposes, De La Salle University

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Readings for History and Development of ESP
De La Salle University
Compiled by Casilda Luzares (cluzares@mail.doshisha.ac.jp)

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APPENDIX C

Course Title: Needs Analysis and Syllabus Design in ESP

De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

TOPIC	REQUIRED READING	TASKS
Orientation and General Introduction to ESP		
Basic Principles of ESP Needs Analysis and Syllabus Design	Hutchinson and Waters 1987 Munby 1978	Lecture/Discussion/ Tasks
Practical Experiences in Needs Analysis andSyllabus Design	Schmidt 1981 Jordan 1983 Schutz and Derwing 1981	1. Write a one-page summary/commentary of four of the ff. articles:
Module 1: Learner Profile	Ramani, et al. 1988 Horowitz 1986	2. Present data collection instrument for analysis
		Presentation of Module 1
Module 2: Target Situation Analysis I	Braine 1989 Jacobsen 1987 DeCarrico and Nattinger 1988	3. Gather information about students' learning needs using two models. Prepare a formal report of the study . *a. Observe classes in the students' major. Do audio-recordings of class proceedings.* *b. Prepare notes oft teacher lectures and compare your notes with those of some students.* *c. Interview students on (1) the kind of preparation they made prior to coming to class, (2) what their perceived needs are.*
		Presentation of Module 2
Module 3: Target Situation Analysis II		4. Examine textbooks used in the content course. Comment on the language used, the organization, density of the content. 5. Examine the syllabus of the content course. What kind of language demands does it make on students? 6. Interview teachers about students' abilities and needs.
Syllabus Designing	Hutchinson and Waters 1987 (Ch.4,7,8) Cheung and Wong 1988 Luzares 1988 Nunan 1990	7. Outline the features of each type of syllabus discussed in H & W 8. Draft a syllabus for a specific group of learners 9. Design a course for a group of learners.
		Presentation of Module 3

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APPENDIX D

READING LIST FOR NEEDS ANALYSIS AND SYLLABUS DESIGN

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COURSE OUTLINE FOR DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

SESSION	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY
1	Introduction to discourse analysis	Chapter 1 & 2 Brown and Yule	What are the characteristics of spoken and written discourse?
2	Language as Communication	Widdowson, 1978 Chapter 1	What factors are involved in communication? Study dialogue extracts to analyze the meaning of communicative competence.
3	Speech Acts	Coulthard (1977) Ch 2	Analyze a piece of discourse and identify the speech acts it contains.
4-5	Coherence/ Topical Analysis	Widdowson, (1978) Ch 2 Lautamatti (1978)	Analyze a piece of discourse using topical analysis. How is coherence achieved?
5-6	Cohesion	Halliday and Hasan, (1976) Ch. 1 & 2; Nunan(1987) Chapter 1	Identify the cohesive devices in a text.
7	Discourse Relations	Crombie (1985) Chapter 4	How does Crombie s model present the structure of discourse
8 - 11	The nature of scientific discourse		
	a. The Widdowson Model	Widdowson (1978) Ch. 2-4	What is Widdowson s concept of scientific discourse structure?
	b. The Washington School	Trimble, Chapter 3-6	Does Trimble s model help you understand a text better?
	c.Scheme, Frames	Carrell (1987) Nunan (1987) Ch.3	Discuss the principles involved in scheme theory.
	d.Genre Analysis	Swales (1986)	Discuss Swales definition of genre. Explain the relationship between form and discourse function.
	Language and Content: authentic texts	Allen & Widdowson Phillips and Shettlesworth in Swales (1985)	What are the arguments for and against authentic discourse?
12	Classroom Discourse	Sinclair and Coulthard (1975)	Analyze a piece of classroom discourse using the Sinclair and Coulthard model.
13	Conversational analysis	Coulthard (1977)	Analyze a piece of conversation. Explain how the turn-taking is controlled.

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READINGS for DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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